EU Statement

by

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on the revision of the EU Strategy against illicit SALW

Statements by intergovernmental and other organisations

Third UN Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects

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Mr. President

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union.

As a regional integration organisation, the European Union has several roles with regard to the fight against illicit SALW and the implementation of the PoA. The EU is a donor for cooperation & assistance. It is a legislator that regulates the trade in firearms on its territory, including the regulation of deactivated firearms. It is a platform for the development of a common foreign and security policy, of which this statement is a manifestation. And it is also a platform for regional strategy development.

Since 2005 the EU's approach against illicit SALW has been guided by the EU Strategy to Combat the Illicit Accumulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons and their Ammunition that was adopted by the European Council.

This Strategy is being revised in order to take into account the relevant developments since 2005. I will mention four:
(1) the threat of terrorism inside the EU including with illicit military grade firearms;
(2) developments in SALW design/technology affecting the capacity of government to address the threat;
(3) developments in the EU and international legislative arms control framework, including the Arms Trade Treaty, the UN Sustainable development goals and EU Common Position 2008/944 on arms export control and
(4) the EU Global Strategy from 2016 that requires an integrated applying a joined-up approach across external policies, between Member States and EU Institutions and between the internal and external policy dimensions.

The purpose of the revised Strategy is to guide integrated, collective and coordinated European action to prevent and curb the illicit acquisition of SALW and their ammunition by terrorists, criminals and other unauthorised actors and to promote accountability and responsibility with regard to the legal SALW trade. It will cover illicit manufacture as well as diversion of legally manufactured weapons and it will cover the trafficking of all firearms – civilian and military grade and their ammunition. The Strategy will put forward objectives with regard to norm-setting, implementation, monitoring and enforcement. It will also cover the different phases in the life cycle of SALW and ammunitions: manufacture, export, stockpiling, and disposal. The Strategy will also present a set of actions to be taken within the EU by EU-institutions and Member States, and proposals for cooperation and assistance for SALW control in the EU’s Eastern and Southern neighbourhoods and the rest of the world.

A very important step towards the new EU Strategy was taken last week when the European Commission adopted a Joint Communication on elements towards an EU Strategy. This Joint Communication is published online. The Council of the EU will now take this communication into account with a view to the adoption of the new EU strategy later this year. This new EU Strategy will guide actions by all EU Institutions and Member States.

Thank you Mr. President